

## **COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC/PUBLIC SAFETY**

**November 20, 2001**

**5:30 PM**

Chairman Sysyn called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Sysyn, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Hirschmann, Lopez

Messrs: T. Lolicata, B. McQuade

Chairman Sysyn addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Discussion regarding the Middle Street Parking Lot.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated the Clerk's Office was asked to work with the Traffic Director and come up with a resolution to the parking lot, as I understood it, by November 17<sup>th</sup> and in order to proceed with anything there has to be actions by both the Committee and the Board. I sat down with Mr. Lolicata and we reviewed whether or not it made sense to put somebody there right now in the evening hours, particularly with the civic center issues that brought this to the forefront. One of the issues that came up was the cost of having a security guard or a parking operator or somebody there. The other part of it is that you do have a lease agreement obviously with McQuades, which was supposed to be reviewed annually and hasn't been for some time but that wasn't part of the issue that we were dealing with necessarily. According to Tom when I spoke with him his indication was that the lot right now, half of the lot is two hour zone metered parking. The other half of the lot is parking for McQuades. There are some handicapped spots in that lot as well, which the City doesn't have meters on obviously. The 34 spaces that McQuades has they are paying \$2 each per month on. If you look at the utilization of the lot, at 100% utilization during the day, which is what that lot was running as I understand it both before and now for the portion the City has, you are approximately at \$99/month a meter. Based on your agreement that you had with McQuades, you were losing approximately \$36,000 annually in revenue. What we had suggested is that if you left it as a two hour parking zone throughout the day and put the meters back in since they are not being fully utilized on that side of the lot anyway, it would generate some revenue in the event that you do have additional costs in the evening. We could initially start out with just having the Clerk's Office and the Traffic Department and the Police Department agree that they will help monitor. In the evening hours when

you have a civic center event and a City Hall event, that it becomes parking for City Hall only. We would put out signage at about 5:45 PM and then about 7:15 PM or 7:30 PM somebody could go out and move it. That provided adequate parking for City Hall. They are public meetings and it is felt that we should be providing parking for those public meetings if people are coming to express their opinions for zoning or planning or the Board. In addition, once we monitor it for a month or so if we found that we needed to have somebody there and physically monitor it every moment and just let people in then we would have to come back to the Committee and let you know what that would cost. I would presume that we would either use Mr. Waldecker's group or the security guards at City Hall. I think we would probably prefer to do it through Traffic and the parking that exists. This was obviously the suggestion that came out of my discussions with Tom. I don't know if Tom has anything to add or Lt. Lussier from the Police Department who is here as well. Tom did indicate to me that if it was returned to metered parking there was a cost to put the meter heads back in at \$330/meter. We did factor that in and I believe the final amount was \$9,900 that was going to be needed to purchase those meters.

Mr. Lolicata stated this was the only direction we could take after the Board directed us to do this. We have the signs to take care of nighttime for the Committees when they are meeting. You have to remember that the meters go until 8 PM now. I noticed a few things like Strange Brew uses it a lot at night so there has to be some strict monitoring. Some Committees start at 5:00 PM or 5:30 PM and you have full Board meetings at 7:00 PM and maybe three or four times a week you have to figure that the signage is going to be used out there. That is the only thing we can come up with that is needed. You people realize and I guess that is what you want and it is needed because people have to park there if they come to City Hall. During the day we have parking down here in front of Market Street for City business only. This sign at night is going to say "Parking for City Hall Only." As far as the meters are concerned, we looked into it and at 50 cents an hour you are talking close to \$36,000 a year with those 34 meters. That is what you asked for and that is what it comes down to. Somebody mentioned permits and you can't have permits in that parking lot because it is utilized by all of the businesses down there and it is full all day long. They have to be two-hour meters and I recommend they stay that way.

Alderman Pariseau stated I just want to express my concern regarding what we plan to do with this parking lot. I think we owe the merchants downtown who stayed with the City during the hard times something and because we are seeing an influx in business activity downtown we are trying to put the boots to those who supported us in the early 1980's until yesterday. I don't think that we should rescind the agreement that we currently have in place with the merchants.

Alderman Hirschmann replied we are not talking about their agreement. We are talking about after hours.

Chairman Sysyn responded no you are talking about taking away the lease.

Alderman Hirschmann stated that is not what we discussed.

Chairman Sysyn replied yes it is.

Alderman Hirschmann stated we asked him to come back with a proposal for nighttime because we are losing revenue if people park there for free. We never discussed the McQuades lease. That is still in force.

Chairman Sysyn replied we didn't discuss it, but if you put parking meters in there it will take away from what you are doing now and other merchants...

Alderman Hirschmann interjected why can't they have their agreement in the daytime and at night you collect meter fees in those spaces. We never discussed making any changes. I was at the last Committee meeting.

Alderman Pariseau stated I wasn't at the last meeting but I was at the meeting before that and this discussion came up.

Chairman Sysyn stated the proposal that is on the floor now would take away from McQuades and the other merchants.

Alderman Hirschmann replied then it is a bad proposal. Who thought it up?

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated I just want to clarify something. I understand that there is a concern about addressing the merchants that are in the area but if you are going to charge meters in the evening then you have to put meters in and there is a \$10,000 cost to that that is also going to need to be addressed. I just want to make sure in whatever you do that there is an understanding of that.

Alderman Pariseau stated I agree with that and I would like Alderman Lopez to present his proposal that we discussed earlier.

Alderman Lopez stated I have worked with a few merchants and I will keep it short. I think we all know the issues. We want to take care of the merchants because as Alderman Pariseau said when there was nothing downtown they stepped forward and they helped the City and we want to do the same for them. I think we have to modify just a little bit what Carol and Tom are saying. I think we need to put all of the meters in over there first of all. If we put all of the meters in

over there and McQuades has a security person over there...there is a question as to whether all 34 spaces are used at one time. I know on many occasions I have been there and there are at least 10 or 15 spaces that are vacant so maybe a compromise along the area of 20 or 25 spaces be utilized for the merchants downtown and what I would also suggest with the security guard are two things. One, we purchase the bags that we have and put validation on the bags so that people realize that it is a validation program in the parking lot with a security guard. In talking with Mr. McQuade, he also indicated that the security guard could be responsible for removing those bags or if the City Clerk wanted those bags on there so that the people could park at night down here, that could also be accomplished with this. Some of the glitches would have to be worked out but I believe you get the drift of it. We would still get revenue from all 34 meters at night, which is a concern. We would get additional revenue from approximately 10-12 meters during the day time, which is needed downtown now because people come into City Hall and stuff. I think that working with the businesses we could put the bags on and take them off for validation and continue the validation program. I think that we can cover most of the expense of the \$9,900 that we need for the meters. That is what I would like to propose – a dual relationship with the businesses downtown as a compromise for that particular parking lot.

Chairman Sysyn stated I thought maybe we should raise the rate a little bit to help us with the bags. Maybe we could add \$1 or \$2 to each parking space and get \$5 a parking space. You have 19 merchants participating and I would think by now...that was supposed to be addressed at least five or six years ago and we never got back to it.

Alderman Lopez stated the \$2 cost would have to go up and be reasonable and I guess to be fair maybe we should allow Mr. McQuade to speak.

Mr. Brooks McQuade stated first I would just like to say thank you for your dedication and hard work for your great vision to what downtown Manchester is starting to become. You people put a lot of hard work into it and it is really starting to show. I thank you and the merchants of the downtown thank you. You people have had some long-range plans for what you feel downtown Manchester should look like and what the citizens of downtown and the citizens of Manchester feel the downtown should look like. You people didn't do any quick fix agendas. You stayed your course. You were very focused on what you wanted the downtown to look like and it is really starting to show. The businesses are starting to come back. We are seeing revitalization of the buildings that were dilapidated and unused. We have seen some great restaurants down here and the small businesses and the civic center. We are starting to see life in the downtown again. What I want to stay focused on is the small businesses that have been here when the good times weren't here. We were here when business was not so great and

the buildings were dilapidated and there was no sign of any life in the downtown but through your vision you created a rebirth of the downtown and we thank you for that. As we move forward, we want to remember that the businesses that were here prior really kept the downtown together. They were the glue that helped you realize your vision. Although you folks are willing to make a commitment to continue with our lot, that lot at times utilizes over 1,000 people coming into the downtown to shop. That is great for the small businesses and it is great for City Hall. It is great for everybody in this community. I just wish you would keep on that faith and vision and long-term goal of keeping the businesses downtown. We would like to keep those 34 spaces. We don't mind doing a bag on the meters or a bag off the meters. We will do whatever it takes to keep those spots. We don't mind a slight adjustment in the cost of those spots but those 34 spaces are vital to the merchants downtown. We use them. They are used by everybody coming into the downtown and I just wish that you would stay with the vision that you had five or six years ago when you allowed us to have that lot. I want to thank you again and I appreciate all you have done for us as merchants in the downtown. You have been great and we would like to see the continued growth with your help. Thank you.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked the security guard is there from what hour to what hour.

Mr. McQuade answered the person is usually there from 7:30 AM or 7:45 AM until about 4 PM.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked and the way it works is when he sees somebody parking there he goes up to that person and makes sure they are going to be using the spot in advance or afterwards.

Mr. McQuade answered prior to the person getting out of the car, the security person is right there at their door with a ticket in hand. That person who is out shopping has that ticket validated and returns it to the security guard.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked and what if he doesn't do that.

Mr. McQuade answered we don't have any lawful way of administering any other...it is on an honor system and it has worked very well in the past.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked so there are 19 merchants participating in this. Are they sharing the cost equally or is that not our concern?

Mr. McQuade answered it is all paid on usage. High users pay more than people who are very low usage on that lot.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked is that based on validation.

Mr. McQuade answered correct.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked so if I have 100 validated a month I would pay less than if I had 500 validated.

Mr. McQuade answered correct.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked and they also share the cost of the security guard on that same basis.

Mr. McQuade answered yes.

Alderman Lopez stated I guess the question is how much we are going to charge for space so that we can move on.

Alderman Pariseau asked do we want to go from \$2 to \$5 or \$2 to \$4.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered we need to clarify the motion. One of the clarifications we need is how many spaces we are talking about. There is an issue in terms of the cost but there was also an issue because as I understood Mr. McQuade he is still asking for the 34 spaces and the Committee was talking about different numbers. In the motion we need to clarify what it is. I can take it a piece at a time and then take it as a full motion if you want. I can just walk through what his proposal was and then we can come up with a decision as to whether it is 20 spaces or 25 spaces or 34 spaces.

Alderman Lopez moved to authorize 30 spaces.

Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated so you want to continue the agreement with 30 spaces. Then the validation bags will be used and we don't have any of those so is the Police Department going to absorb that cost.

Alderman Lopez stated it can be worked out between Traffic and the merchants or whoever gives out the bags.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied it is the Police Department who gives out the bags.

Chairman Sysyn asked who collects the money for the rental.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the Traffic Department.

Mr. Lolicata stated all of my bags say no parking.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied they are saying they want new bags stating "Validation" on them.

Mr. Lolicata responded okay. What do they want them to say on them?

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated "Validation Parking" instead of "No Parking" as I understand it.

Chairman Sysyn stated and Tom if they pay more for their spaces there will be money to buy those bags.

Mr. Lolicata replied I guess so. Right now, I have to buy them.

Alderman Lopez stated Mr. McQuade has indicated to me and you can work out the details but I believe the merchants would pay for some of the cost.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated so that will be a cooperative agreement to be determined at a later date.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked how much are the bags.

Mr. Lolicata answered the canvas bags are \$15 to \$20. They have locks. We can probably get something a little cheaper than that. If you have somebody watching these, you don't need the greatest bag in the world but something that will cover it right.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated so we have the validation bags and the 30 spaces. There was a cost adjustment discussion. Is there a price?

Alderman Lopez replied \$5 per space.

Alderman Levasseur stated \$4 is plenty.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated I am going to put it all in one motion for you once I get it all down. Let's presume that we are doing this as the annual review so they don't have to come back again in January if we set this up. It would go into effect sometime in January when we get the bags. We would recommend that the agreement would be initiated in January 2002 for how long?

Chairman Sysyn replied for one year to be revisited.

Alderman Lopez stated one year and then we can review it.

Alderman Levasseur stated five years is fine.

Chairman Sysyn stated it was originally set-up to be reviewed annually.

Alderman Levasseur replied you guys never did it annually so make it five years and you will be fine.

Alderman Hirschmann stated before this administration took over it was annually.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked and 30 is the number.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered yes. We have 30 spaces and we have validation bags to be put on during the day, which is to be arranged cooperatively with Traffic and the merchants. The charge is \$5 a space with an annual review and I am presuming we are doing 8 AM until 4 PM because that is when the security guard leaves and at that time it becomes metered parking.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked what was this idea about leaving the bags on some nights.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied I was going to ask that that be taken up separately because I still think that the signage is appropriate for that.

On motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to approve a new agreement with McQuades for a parking validation program in the Middle Street Parking Lot effective January 1, 2002 as follows:

1) The agreement cover the rental of 30 spaces @ \$5.00 per space per month for validation parking only during the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM Monday through Friday; 2) That McQuades agree to utilize validation parking only bags on the meters and that such bags be purchased from funds cooperatively with the merchants and Traffic Department; 3) That McQuades agree to place and remove the validation meter bags on the meter heads at the meters so designated by the Traffic Director at times determined by the Traffic Director to meet the terms and intentions of the agreement; and 4) That the Traffic Director be authorized to execute such agreement subject to annual review of the Committee on Traffic; such execution subject to review and approval of the City Solicitor and Risk Manager.



Deputy Clerk Johnson stated for the evening portion of it when we were talking about putting out signage for City Hall parking for that one hour period while the civic center was loading up so to speak, then at that point it would just come out as being public parking for anybody in the area. There are merchants that use those areas in the evening hours as well and that would make it available to them. If they are in there at 5 PM then they are going to be in there under the two hour zone anyway. The thought process was you have public that come to the ZBA meetings and so forth and if they are expected to pay for parking at civic center events and that sort of thing then you may have issue with that. You would have your metered parking on Saturdays when the civic center is going. It only goes until 8 PM so the businesses in the area in essence have free parking for the rest of the evening. People can come in at 7:30 PM and throw money in the meter until 8 PM and they would be set for the night.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked what about the people coming for the Zoning Board and Planning Board meetings. Are they going to have to pay the regular rate?

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered it would say "City Hall Parking Only" so there is not going to be any cost associated with public parking. On those nights you wouldn't be collecting in that lot. The only time we would post the signs is when we have meetings at City Hall and when there is a civic center event. There will be conflicts on Wednesday nights with ZBA and hockey games.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated so people would have to read the sign.

Deputy Clerk Johnson replied the sign will be posted right at the entrance so people can't miss it.

Alderman Vaillancourt responded right but some people are going to pay anyway.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated and the sign isn't going to be put out until 5:45 PM so some people may be parked there already.

Alderman Levasseur asked how many spaces do you anticipate that taking up.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the only way you can do it is to put the signage right at the entrance and the whole lot is going to be...whoever is in the lot at 5:45 PM stays. Nobody is going to be removed from the lot but if you have somebody who comes downtown and goes over to the Merrimack for dinner at 5:30 PM they are not going to have a problem because they are already going to be in the lot but a civic center event starting around 7 PM, probably around 6 PM the security guards at City Hall can just go over and move the sign out.

Alderman Vaillancourt asked how is somebody going to know if somebody is parking there for a City Hall event or a civic center event.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered that is why we were stating that for the next three or four weeks we would monitor it to see when people park where they are going. If we see it is a problem then we will have to come back to the Committee and request somebody to be there and do a validation program similar to what McQuades does.

On motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to allow the City Hall parking signage as proposed.

Chairman Sysyn stated I had one little problem that I talked to Tom Lolicata about. I went to shop at a market and I don't know if you took care of it yet but on Spruce Street where Bakolas Market is, if I had parked there on a civic center event night I would have gotten a ticket.

Mr. Lolicata replied those businesses you are talking about, we are taking care of them. They are going to get combination signs and the 15-minute parking signs are going into those areas.

Chairman Sysyn stated I had people even on Cedar Street and Spruce Street who lived there and they would prefer to have parking meters rather than residential parking on both sides.

Mr. Lolicata replied I understand that but when we went out there everybody wanted residential parking and that is what we did.

Chairman Sysyn stated but residential parking the way it works at Amoskeag Place, you get a permit and if you park at a parking meter they won't tag you. That is the way it should have gone on Cedar Street and Spruce Street.

Mr. Lolicata replied all of those streets you are talking about don't even have meters.

Alderman Levasseur stated there have only been two events and they have already changed their mind. That is one woman who changed her mind, not the other people. Wait.

Mr. Lolicata stated so far the complaints we got were from the businesses, which were taken care of with combination signs. The other ones were the clubs at night. The only people who can park in these spaces 365 days a year are the residents and residents only and they need a permit. That is what this is about.

Chairman Sysyn replied so if I go to something on Spruce Street when there is a civic center event or not, I will get tagged.

Mr. Lolicata responded absolutely. That is what residential parking is.

Chairman Sysyn replied but the streets are for everybody.

Mr. Lolicata stated the businesses have been taken care of with the ordinances in place. We put the 15-minute parking in for those markets because they do have a business. That does state all day, 365 days a year and that is how the residential parking was passed. If somebody wants to go down to those clubs at night, they are going to have to park on Pine Street and pay a meter or go somewhere else. That is what the residents wanted and that is what they got.

Chairman Sysyn replied and now the residents are complaining about it so we should probably revisit it at a later time.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Vaillancourt, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee